

It is often noticed that humidity alone causes a dramatic increase in reptile activity in general. Some snake species are especially active during heavy rain, the hole dwelling and smaller forms perhaps because of the direct flooding action of the rain. Cobras (and other species notably susceptible to cold) spend much of their time in trees during the cold, rainy part of the year in south-eastern India.

MADRAS SNAKE PARK,
GUINDY DEER SANCTUARY,
MADRAS 600 022,
January 29, 1973.

R. WHITAKER

13. COLOUR VARIATION IN RUSSELL'S VIPER (*VIPERA R. RUSSELLII*)

(With a plate)

Russell's vipers from the Indian sub-continent and Ceylon are fairly uniform in colour. The exception is the geographic race from the northern part of the western ghats in Maharashtra.

The typical Indian Russell's viper is light brown above with brown, black and white ringed oval spots dorsally. The Maharashtra form is a light yellowish brown snake with almost completely uniform dark spots with only a suggestion of the white ring. The underside is uniformly yellowish white. The Madras form is brightly marked with occasional black markings ventrally. Those from the Calcutta area are similar to the Madras colour form but darker and always with black spots ventrally.

MADRAS SNAKE PARK,
GUINDY DEER SANCTUARY,
MADRASS 600 022,
March 29, 1973.

R. WHITAKER

14. ON THE SEXUAL DIMORPHISM OF A SILUROID FISH, *OMPOK BIMACULATUS* (BLOCH), WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO PECTORAL SPINE

While handling large numbers of specimens of *Ompok bimaculatus* (Bloch) in the laboratory and in the field in connection with investigations on its biology in Kulgarhi reservoir (MP) some disparity was observed in the dentition pattern, size and stiffness of the pectoral spines of males and females. The genital papilla was also observed to

Whittaker: Russell's Viper



Vipera russellii russellii from Maharashtra with typical solid dark dorsal spots, fading at the tail.

